

I'm worried about HIV and AIDS



FAST FACTS

- It is normal to worry, but testing is the only way to know for sure if you have HIV. Whatever the result, you can get on with your life.
- Antiretroviral treatment (ART) means that people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. If you are HIV-positive it's better for you to know as early as possible so that you can get the right treatment and support.
- There are only a few ways you can get HIV. Knowing the facts and risks will mean you can protect yourself and others.

Whatever your worries and anxieties [about HIV and AIDS](#), we're here to help. This page talks you through some of the most common things people worry about when it comes to HIV.

Did you know? One of the biggest reasons why people don't get tested for HIV is because they're scared. They're scared about HIV, taking a test, what it means to be positive, and what other people will think. It's a completely natural reaction to have, but it doesn't have to be this way.

I'm worried about getting infected with HIV

Despite what you may have heard, there are only a few [ways you can get HIV](#). Unfortunately, there are a lot of [myths and misconceptions around HIV and AIDS](#) meaning people get confused about how HIV is transmitted.

It's important that you know the facts about HIV and know what the risk factors are. If you think you have put yourself at risk of HIV, go and get tested. It's always a good idea to test, even if it's just to stop you from worrying.

I'm worried about testing for HIV

It's normal to worry about testing and [what the results will be](#), but testing is the only way to know for sure if you have HIV.

I'm worried about the results

If it turns out that you're HIV-negative, then knowing for certain will stop you from worrying. Also, make sure you know [how to avoid putting yourself at risk of HIV](#) in the future.

If it does turn out that you're HIV-positive, it's better for you to know as early as possible so that you can get the right treatment and support. [HIV treatment](#) now means that people living with HIV can live a normal healthy life.

I'm worried about the test

You may be worried about the test itself – but there's no reason to be. Testing is quick, painless and confidential, and uses just a tiny sample of blood or a swab taken from your mouth. Remember that the tester is there to help you - they do this all the time. Ask them questions about what to expect to put yourself at ease. Find out more about [what's involved in an HIV test](#).

Our [HIV testing section](#) guides you through everything you need to know about going for an HIV test.

I'm worried about what others will think

A lot of people worry about testing for HIV, what it would mean for their lives if they tested positive – [like relationships, work life, having children](#) – and what people would think of them. Just the thought of going into a clinic scares some people – ‘what if someone sees me going in?’

It's perfectly normal to worry about these things. But remember to keep the facts about what it means to [live with HIV](#) at the front of your mind. Don't let fear affect your health.

Unfortunately, hearing other people's negative attitudes about HIV often puts people off getting tested. People often have these negative views simply because they don't understand the facts about HIV. If you know the facts, you'll feel more confident about ignoring or challenging people who talk negatively about HIV.

Remember, HIV is treatable. But it's only treatable if you're brave enough to get tested. If you find out you're negative, continue to focus on being negative. If you're positive, that's ok too - you've done the right thing by testing and now you can take treatment to stay healthy.

The worst thing is not knowing. Not knowing means that you won't get the treatment and support to save your life. If you're positive and you carry on not knowing, you will become ill and you could be putting your life in danger – why take that risk?

Forget what other people think, your health is more important. You're the only one who can stand up for your health and test for HIV.

Watch our short animation about people who put their fears aside and took an HIV test.

Why am I so scared of HIV?

Video of Why am I so scared of HIV?

This article was written for AVERT's 'Stand Up to HIV' campaign to mark World AIDS Day 2015.

Photo credit: ©GettyImages/Tim Robberts. Images used on this site are for illustrative purposes only and any persons depicted therein are models and not affiliated with AVERT or its mission directly. Image courtesy of Getty Images.



Last full review: 19 November 2015

Next full review: 19 November 2018

Last updated: 12 October 2017